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ABSTRACT

Responding to children's natural interest in creating art, early childhood educators have historically given the visual arts an honored place in the curriculum. Even in the 1980s and 1990s, as the push for earlier academic skill development increased, art continued its centrality in programs for young children. This chapter offers teachers theory and research to support the inclusion of art in the curriculum. The chapter begins with an overview and critique of the theories of children's art, including developmental, cognitive, psychoanalytic, and perceptual theories. The chapter then discusses the implications of the different theories for teaching art to young children. Theories and direct action are discussed, including the selection of artistic materials, art content, and teaching strategies. The chapter also considers the impact of societal forces in questioning the role of visual arts for young children, values inherent in art instruction, and the use of technology to integrate art into the total curriculum. (Contains 66 references.) (KB)

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CHAPTER 9

Art for Young Children

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ART AND young children are a natural combination. Uninhibited, anxious to explore their environment, experiment with materials, understand their world, and communicate ideas and feelings, children find creating art an intriguing and gratifying experience. Given the slightest opportunity, children the world over create drawings, sculptures, and paintings with assurance and interest (Thompson, 1995). Whether in the high Andean Mountains, in the jungles of the Amazon, or on the sidewalks of New York City, children leave their mark by drawing in the sand or mud, or on the sidewalk with sticks, stones, or any other tool they can find.

Responding to children's natural interest in creating art, early childhood educators have historically given the visual arts an honored place in the curriculum. Perhaps the long tradition began in the Frobelian kindergarten, where children wove placemats, punched designs in paper, or folded paper to create ornate shapes.

The early nursery schools treasured children's art as well, but the artwork they advocated differed greatly from the rigid Gifts and Occupations Froebel had prescribed. Rose Alschuler, Harriet Johnson, and other leaders of the nursery school movement during the early 1900s encouraged the use of raw materials—clay, paints, and crayons—as a means of fostering children's freedom of expression, and thus promoting their total development (Beatty, 1995).

Guided by Lowenfeld's *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947) and Read's (1947) *Education Through Art*, the visual arts were prevalent in schools for young children during the 1940s and 1950s. During the 1960s, spurred by the ideas and research of Gardner and the staff of Project Zero (1989),

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as well as by the concern for fostering children's creative thought and expression, the visual arts retained an honored place in the curriculum.

More recently, during the 1980s and 1990s, the role of the arts in the elementary and secondary curriculum, however, has been questioned. The push for accountability, higher standards, and mastery of basic skills became paramount. Because of pressure to foster achievement of isolated academic skills, the role of all the arts, not just the visual, in schools was challenged. Nevertheless, despite the push for earlier academic skill development, art continued its centrality in programs for young children in child care, preschools, and kindergartens, and in most primary grade classrooms.

Wanting to provide the optimum learning environment for children, meet individual needs, and foster symbolic and creative thinking, teachers today believe the visual arts are critical not only to children's development but also to the development of an integrated, meaningful early childhood curriculum (Kindler & Darras, 1994; Thompson, 1995). This chapter offers teachers theory and research to support the inclusion of art in the curriculum. Beginning with an overview and critique of the theories of children's art, the chapter concludes with implications for teaching art.

THEORIES OF ART

Theories have been advanced to explain the art of young children. Among these are the developmental, cognitive, psychoanalytic, and perceptual theories. Each of these theories has influenced the teaching of art to children, and each is useful in explaining the nature of children's art.

Developmental Theories

As early as 1885, Ebenezer Cooke drew attention to the successive stages of development found in children's drawings and advanced the theory that children drew in accordance with their general development. Since that time, others have documented that children's artwork follows a general pattern of development (Hong-Ik, 1997). Children in schooled societies and cultures the world over appear to progress through the following stages in the production of art:

1. The use of circular, ovoid, and sticklike representations of people and things during the early preschool years

2. The creation and representation of people and things by around age 4 or 5
3. The creation and repetition of basic representational formulas, including representations of space and motion, during the primary grades
4. The development of an increasing degree of visual correspondence during the elementary grades
5. The reproductiion of the shape, color, and spatial location of objects during the upper elementary grades
6. The development of a type of realism in adolescence

Lowenfeld (1947) codified this description of children's developing artistic skills by delineating the following stages:

1. *Scribbling* (ages 2–4). The first stage of self-expression
2. *Preschematic* (ages 4–7). The first representational attempts
3. *Schematic* (ages 7–9). Achievement of a form concept
4. *Gang* (ages 9–11). The dawning of realism
5. *Reasoning* (ages 11–13). Pseudo-realistic stage

Lowenfeld (1947) described these stages as the unfolding of a genetic program. Each of the stages was believed to be a part of the natural and normal aspects of human growth and development. Children, he claimed, must pass through one stage before they can achieve another. Changes in children's total development—that is, their affective, intellectual, social, and physical growth and development—are reflected in their art. No external teaching could assist a child in moving from one stage to another.

More recently, Wolfe and Perry (1989) refined the idea of development stages of art. They believed it was possible, beginning with the first attempts at drawing, between 12 and 14 months of age, to identify the advent of a series of distinct systems. Each system is characterized by different rules about the kinds of information to be recorded and the most powerful or satisfying ways to make those records. These stages are not viewed as a progression toward realism, however, but rather as drawing systems with distinct motives and purposes. These distinct drawing systems are outlined as follows:

1. *Object-based representation* (12–14 months). Children treat art and art materials as they treat other objects: they use them as objects, not tools.
2. *Gestural representations* (14–24 months). Children focus on the representation of motions and movements.

3. *Point-plot representations* (24–35 months). Children attempt to give meaning to their graphic expressions. The scribble can be named.
4. *Visual-spatial information systems* (3–5 years). The use of relative size and shapes to depict a geometric reality begins to appear.
5. *Rule-given visual spatial systems* (5–7 years). A schematic and highly conventional attempt to give geometric reality dominates children's drawing efforts.

Just as many endorse developmental theories of art, others find the theories lacking. On the grounds that developmental theories do not account for the role of culture, instruction, or how individual diffferences affect children's artistic development, the validity of maturational theories have been challenged. Research does suggest that there are differences in the way children progress through stages of art based on their culture. The indigenous art of a society and having the opportunity to draw or attend preschool (Martlew & Connolly, 1996), as well as other cultural factors, have been found to affect children's developing artistic abilities.

Preferences for representing the human form have been found to vary by culture. An example is the "Islamic torso" found in children's drawings throughout the Middle East (Martlew & Connolly, 1996). Further, children living in cultures with little interest in art or opportunity to draw produce simple, more basic forms than do children in more artistically sophisticated societies (Goodenough & Harris, 1963).

Nor do developmental theories account for the role of instruction on the development of art. Vygotsky (1986) pointed out that what children can do when left alone, working without assistance, does not indicate what they could do if they were given the proper guidance and support. Research suggests that very limited adult assistance can affect the level of children's art (Mathews, 1997).

The role of individual differences in the production of art has led to questioning developmental theories. Praisner (1984) questioned the maturational theories of art. He studied the childhood drawings of Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, and Klee and concluded that these childhood drawings were more adultlike and significantly advanced as compared to the usual drawings of young children. Winner (1996) studied the artwork of children with a wide range of physical and mental disabilities. She concluded that the art of children with disabilities was unrelated to, or independent of, their cognitive ability as measured by tests of verbal or general intelligence.

Accompanying the recognition of the role that culture, instruction,

and individual differences play in children's art is a general rejection of developmental theories of human growth and learning:

> Views of human development have changed profoundly. . . . We have, instead, begun to understand that what we once thought were ordered sequences or steps are better understood as additions to a growing repertoire. (Wolf, 1998, p. xi)

Cognitive Theories

Cognitive theories are, in part, developmental. The theories accept the idea that children's art develops along predictable, predetermined maturational lines. The explanation for this development, however, is that children's drawings mirror their cognitive growth and development, not their general maturation. "To little children, drawing is a language—a form of cognitive expression—and its purpose is not primarily esthetic" (Goodenough, 1926, p. 14). Thus Goodenough and others who advocated the cognitive theory of art believed that explanations of children's art must go beyond simply attributing artistic development to maturation. The more valid explanation is that children's art is representative of general cognitive, or concept, development, not simple maturational development.

Representation gradually becomes not only imagery, but rather images that inhere within certain relationships, including spatial ones, which are increasingly understood and reproduced in children's expressions. The inaccuracies that occur in children's art are believed to be caused by the fact that children neglect spatial relationships of proportion, distance, orientation, and perspective; this neglect results in failure to synthesize image elements.

Goodenough (1926) believed that children's ability to form concepts is an intellectual ability, requiring children to recognize similarities and differences among a group of objects or ideas. If children can make these distinctions and are able to recognize instances of a class when they confront it, they have attained a concept of that class (Goodenough & Harris, 1963a). By analyzing the amount of detail and realism that appear in children's drawings, then, it would be possible to obtain an index of a child's intellectual maturity by asking the child to draw a picture of a man and evaluating that drawing according to a set of specified criteria.

The *Goodenough Harris Draw-A-Person Test* (1963b) does just that. The fact that children's scores on the test correlate highly with their scores on standardized tests of achievement—such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children and the Stanford-Binet (U.S. National Center for

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Health Statistics, 1970), and other measures of children's mental abilities—gives support not only to the test but also to the idea that children's drawings represent the level of their concept formation; that is, children draw what they know.

Piagetian theories added credence to the idea that children's drawings are reflective of their cognitive growth. Piaget and Inhelder (1955) suggested that children, in order to draw or produce art, must first be able to evoke what is absent or past, in order to think about it. This evocation requires symbolization to represent what is not present in the here-and-now world of the child.

Howard Gardner (1982) and Mansilla and Gardner (1997), by linking creativity, symbol development, and drawing with cognitive or mental development in the theory of multiple intelligences, also supported cognitive theories of art. In Gardner's view, artistic activities are cognitive through and through, for our symbol systems use drawing, writing, and gesture and are basic vehicles of understanding the world, without which the mind hardly exists, at least in the human sense. Others also point out that the ability to represent things that are not present in the here-and-now world is a form of language (Dyson, 1990; Eisner, 1997). Gardner's work with Project Zero led to the conclusion that the extent to which children fail to attend to repleteness, expression, and composition supports the idea that artworks are functioning for children as nonaesthetic cognitive symbols such as maps or graphs (Gardner, 1987).

Just as maturation theories of children's art have been challenged, so have cognitive theories. Basically, these challenges arise from the same concerns about the role of experience and culture that have been used to challenge developmental theories of art. Cross-cultural studies of Japanese and American children's drawings, as well as those of Native American children, seem to cast doubt on the validity of attributing children's drawings to their level of cognitive growth. In each of these three cultures, Wilson and Wilson (1989) found that the cultural values of imitation and copying, as well as the use of paint brushes to write with, greatly influenced children's developing artistic abilities.

Regardless, educators who reject developmental theories of art because of the passive role assigned to the teacher find cognitive theories a comfortable alternative. As Vygotsky (1986) pointed out, the richer the experience and the more fluent the instruction, the greater the possibility of extending children's existing knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Psychoanalytic Theories

Children do not draw what they know; rather they draw what they feel. Art comes from "deep down inside" a child (Cole, 1966). Firmly based on

the concept of an unconscious—a type of mental activity that people are not even aware of—this theory of child art postulates a relationship between children's psychological development and their art. Children's art products are believed to reflect their emotions and to be expressions of deep, unconscious feelings instead of reflections of their conscious knowledge, general development, or concept formation.

According to psychoanalytic theories of art, children draw themselves as large circles with sticks that represent arms and legs not because they are unaware of shoulders, necks, or stomachs, but because the circle represents a force within the child as a symbol for the womb, breast, or some other emotionally potent object. The progression from a circle to realistic representation is explained as a growth process. As children grow, their conscious thoughts suppress the powerful force of the unconscious and they are able to draw and paint more realistically.

Historically, psychoanalytic thought greatly influenced the nursery school curriculum. Well before Alschuler and Hattwick (1947) analyzed children's paintings and reached the conclusion that children's painting styles were correlated with their personality traits, Freudian theories of infant sexuality and concepts of psychosexual development led to the use of fingerpaints, clay, wide brushes, and flowing easel paints. These free-flowing materials, it was postulated, would give children a healthy way with which to express hidden sexual urges and feelings. Small crayons, pencils, and fine paint brushes were seen as too restrictive.

Over the course of time, Freudian theories were questioned and the idea that children drew what they felt fell out of favor in the early childhood community. The theories, however, are still prevalent in the area of art therapy. Allowing children to fully and freely explore a variety of materials—such as clay, paints, and other materials believed to be freeing—has been found to help ease children's separation anxiety (Muri, 1996); circumvent problems before being treated in pediatric hospitals (Prager, 1995); and offer at-risk children a safe way to express their feelings (Essex, 1996).

Perceptual Theories

To those endorsing perceptual theories of art, children draw what they see, not what they feel or know (Arnheim, 1974). Gestalt psychology maintains that children do not see objects as the sum of observed parts; rather they see perceptual wholes or total images structured in an active process. The brain acts on the basis of retinal impressions. For the Gestaltists, perception is an active process. The brain acts on incoming visual perceptions according to laws of perception. Arnheim (1974) expressed it this way:

> The perceiver works on his sensations; he makes something with the sensory excitations focused in his eyes and transmitted to his brain. It is a mistake to believe that human perception is completely like the action of a camera . . . our brains organize and restructure the electrochemical impulses received from our eyes. (p. 128)

Thus children draw a person as a head (the circle) with arms attached noot because this is the only thing they know about people, but because thiis is all that is seen as necessary to represent a human being. Children knnow that arms come from the trunk of their body, not their head, and thae circles children draw to represent the human body are not simply heeads without trunks—rather they are undifferentiated head-trunk unnits.

June McFee advanced perceptual theories of art in her book *Preparatiom for Art* (1972). She based her theory on concepts from perceptual theeory as well as behavioral theories. She claimed that art is based on sevveral factors, not just one. The readiness of the child, the psychological enviironment in which children work, children's ability to handle informaation, and their delineation skills all affect the level of their artwork.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Imppplications for teaching art to young children stem directly from the diffffferent theoretical explanations of children's art. Theories are not the onhly belief systems guiding art education for young children, however. Soocietal forces and values and our increasing technology have also affecctted the art education.

Theeories and Direct Action

Theere is major conflict among early childhood art educators (McWhinnie, 19992) as to whether art is a form of self-expression (the psychoanalytic appproach); a form of language or symbol system (cognitive theories); or a poerceptual phenomenon (perceptual theories). Nevertheless teachers usee theories to guide them as they select (1) artistic materials; (2) art conntent; and (3) teaching strategies.

Selllection and Use of Art Materials. Today, developmental and psychoanalytic theories continue to influence art curriculum in schools for youung children. Using Bredekamp and Copple's (1996) *Developmentally Apppropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth Throough Age 8* (second edition) as a reference and the national standards

for arts education (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations [CNAEA], 1994), which state that "students in the earlier grades should engage in developmentally appropriate learning experiences" (p. 21), many teachers endorse psychoanalytic and maturational theories of art. Believing that art is an activity of self-expression that cannot be taught and that this self expression develops according to a maturational plan, they refuse to apply any form of external standard, whether of technique or form. Doing so, they believe, would immediately induce inhibitions and frustrate children's artistic development.

There are problems with this "hands-off" approach. Because teachers may view their role as passive, they too often become the providers of materials and builders of an environment in which children are expected to explore, experiment, and express themselves fully. Following children's development, and believing children need to express their emotions freely, they offer children large paper in great amounts and large markers, paint brushes, and paint. Knowing these very young children cannot control their scribbling, they do not confine children to the boundaries of the paper.

To keep children interested as they grow, teachers continually search for new and more interesting materials for children to draw or paint with. Thus teachers have children drawing in shaving cream, rolling marbles through paint, or trying to paint with sticks.

Further, it is clear that it is not enough to simply make materials available. Kindler (1995) found that many children did not take advantage of materials, and when they did so they used the materials in random ways, without thought or care. Even when children actually used the materials, they did so without attempting to create images or to communicate ideas or feelings (Baker, 1994; Zurmuehlem, 1990).

Then, too, children continually presented with new media are never able to gain control over, or develop skill in, the use of any one medium and may not be able to acquire the skills and techniques necessary to actually use these materials to create art. The stunning artwork of children in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and Far Eastern cultures might be attributed to the fact that art materials there are carefully introduced to children. When social knowledge about how to use materials, such as using slip to join two pieces of clay, is necessary to its use, children are given direction in how to use the technique. They are also given time to experience and explore the same material over and over. By doing so they gain control over the media, learn what can result from the interaction of hand and eye with the material, and then use it to express ideas, concepts, experiences, or emotions (see Chapter 12, this volume; Seefeldt, 1995; Thompson, 1995).

Art materials have also been found to either hinder or foster chil-

dren's production of art. Offering 5-year-olds fine (one-quarter to one-half inch wide) paint brushes instead of the traditional inch or wider brushes enabled children to incorporate significantly more detail in their easel paintings (Seefeldt, 1979). Salome (1967) explored children's use of pencils and crayons and found that although there were no significant differences in the amount of details in their drawings, children tended to fill more space when using crayons than markers.

Selection of Art Content. When materials are the focus of art, teachers may not think setting goals or objectives is necessary. One researcher found that teachers, when asked about their goals, were unable to do so, but talked instead about art in general (Brittain, 1979). On the other hand, teachers who believe, as Goodenough (1926) did, that drawing is a language and thus a form of cognitive expression, see goal setting and planning for art as a part of their role. Believing in a more active role for the teacher, they (1) establish goals and objectives, (2) plan to motivate and instruct children, and (3) foster children's reflection on and appreciation for art.

Goals for art can stem from a number of sources. The national standards for arts education (CNAEA, 1994) is one source of goals. The standards organize goals around content and achievement, stating that children should

- Understand and apply media, techniques, and processes
- Use knowledge of structures and functions
- Choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- Understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.
- Make connections between visual arts and other disciplines

These goals would be applied in light of consideration of children's maturational learning levels. An understanding of children's thought processes permits teachers to select achievable goals and plan for interaction between children and themselves.

Children's growing awareness of the link between art and their ideas, a developmental milestone, "requires also recognition and response from teachers and peers" (Thompson, 1995, p. 92). Thompson pointed out that only 30% of 4-year-olds appeared to know what they were going to draw before they put crayon to paper, while 80% of 5-year-old children begin to draw with an intention firmly in mind. Thus, by 5 years of age, teachers

can ask children to discuss their plans and ideas for an art project, as well as to monitor their actions in achieving these goals.

Teaching Strategies. Believing art is an expression of ideas, thinking, or emotions, teachers plan for motivational experiences and other teaching strategies. Motivational experiences can be artistic, intellectual, or imaginative (Seefeldt, 1995). Artistic motivation could stem from the materials or the artwork of children or of others. Mixing paints, making clay, and watching tempera paints flowing together serve as a form of motivation. The artwork of others—illustrators of children's favorite authors, or looking at and reflecting on art prints—might serve to motivate children. By age 5 or 6, children can begin to think about works of art from the artist's point of view, speculate on the artist's intentions, and measure an artist's success against their own response. Children use this knowledge in many ways; for example, they may borrow an artist's theme or methodology (Thompson, 1995).

Imagination, which empowers humans to create and to engage in works of art (Greene, 1997), is another motivational tool. Egan (1997) claimed that imagination and fantasy stories, which "most powerfully engage children" (p. 346), are other sources of motivation for art. He suggested that teachers read fantasy stories to children and provide appropriate props with which children can reenact the stories in their play. Then teachers can provide art materials that would enable children to represent either the fantasy stories, or their own fantasies, in their artwork.

If one endorses the cognitive theories of art, then the most potent form of motivation is experiential. The idea is that creating art involves taking an experience and creating it anew and in a form for others to take information from. Eisner (1994, 1997) describes an experience as a transaction between individual and environment. This transaction involves sensory, first-hand interaction with both the environment and others; is continuous; and includes language and the opportunity for reflection (Dewey, 1938).

An example of how experiences lead to art productions is found in *The Amusement Park for Birds* (1990), a video of children's experiences building an amusement park for birds in Reggio Emilia. Children decided to create an amusement park for the birds they observed in the open space in back of their center. Creating this amusement park involved recalling their visits to an amusement park and finding out that water and fountains were attractive to birds. After discussions and study, the children produced drawings of various types of water wheels and fountains they imagined the birds would find attractive. Language was used; teach-

ers offered instruction in the use of paints, paper, and clay. Not only did children have repeated encounters with visiting and observing *fountains and water wheels*, but they had repeated encounters with art materials, processes, and techniques that allowed them to give form to what they had seen and learned.

When experiential learning is at the heart of the early childhood curriculum, there is a role for teachers. Teachers in Reggio Emilia interacted with children, discussing plans for their art products, describing the work, as well as asking questions and challenging children to higher levels of production. Talking about art is a necessary component of a true experience. Still, Engle (1996) cautioned that visual works do not always have to be interpreted through verbal discussion. She suggested that teachers can look and talk about what the product is made of, what they see (lines, shapes, colors, and so forth), what it represents, how it is organized, what it is about, and where the ideas came from—but only when done so with sensitivity.

More direct teaching strategies have been advocated by those endorsing perceptual theories of art. These typically involve focusing children's attention on the details and the nature of things in their environment (Haanstra, 1996; McFee, 1972). The goal is to improve children's visual discrimination and enable children to fully perceive their environment. Generally, research suggests that visual training does help children to see more details and significant relationships as they respond to their environment, both visually and cognitively (McFee, 1972). Haanstra (1996), in a meta-analysis of art education research literature, concluded that art education is more effective in producing results when it focuses on aesthetic perception than when it focuses on visual-spatial abilities.

This training need not be extensive. Richards (1988) gave students in the United States and Jamaica perceptual training that appeared to have an effect on children's production of art in both countries; and Mathews (1997) demonstrated that something as minor as showing children a sphere, an elongated ovoid, and a straight-sided ovoid, and focusing their attention on the differences in the three shapes, increased 4- and 5-year-olds' ability to accurately draw these shapes.

Smith and the Drawing Study Group (1998) believe that asking children to observe and to focus their attention on the object or things they are drawing "concretizes strategies children have been using unconsciously and furthers their understanding that this kind of responsive drawing is not a matter of talent, but a matter of hard work and thinking" (p. 11).

More direct teaching strategies have been advanced by Betty Edwards, author of the best-selling *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*

(1978), who convinced millions of people that anyone, at any age, could learn to draw if given the proper instruction. Mona Brookes (1988, 1989) also emphasized the idea that all children, at any age, could be taught to draw by being taught to copy. Wilson and Wilson (1985), based on a study of drawings by Egyptian children, concluded that children learn to draw by copying, but not as in the case of Monart Schools, by copying the drawings of an adult artist or master. They copy the drawings of other children.

There seems to be no doubt that direct instructional strategies can, in fact, produce results. The question remains, however, as to the efficacy and efficiency of any of the teaching strategies. Too many of the strategies seem to be designed to answer what Piaget and Inhelder (1969) once termed "the American question," that is, "How can you advance children through the stages of art more quickly?" One may ask whether or not it is efficient, or even ethical, to teach children skills, techniques, or responses to the visual arts that will occur naturally, as children grow and mature.

Societal Forces and Values and Technology

Societal forces have led to questioning the role of the visual arts in curricula for young children. Pressure to account for children's learning, increase standardized test scores, and ensure that all children are learning has led to decreasing emphasis on the visual arts. Many who do not understand or accept the centrality of art in schools for young children continue to view the visual arts as a frill, not worthy of children's time in a school setting.

Educators, however, can challenge these views. Making and studying art contributes to integrating the curriculum by emphasizing unique and alternative modes of thinking and acting that are intrinsic to art (Anderson, 1981; Cohen & Hoot, 1997; Egan, 1997). Kay (1992) argued that arts education should be basic because of its contributions to children's intelligence. She outlined three phases of research concerning spatial ability and theories of perception, highlighting the role between art education and general education.

Educators also see a role for art as an integrator of the curriculum. Art can be combined with children's language learning. Because art helps children differentiate between shapes, it has been related to reading readiness skills. Mills (1973) found that children receiving 10 art lessons achieved significantly higher reading readiness scores on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test than those without the instruction.

Teachers can easily incorporate art into children's language learning.

Teachers can ask children to incorporate drawing into their written journals (Fahey, 1996; Manning & Manning, 1996) and can use children's literature to extend and inspire children's thinking, which in turn could enhance their art. Others have found that infusing art into the curriculum provides a necessary image for children to write with clarity and purpose, and leads to improved learning. The *Learning to Read Through the Arts* project, which consisted of three programs for children at least 2 years below reading level, reported significantly reading gains, as well as increased enthusiasm for school (Mills, 1973).

Art is also helpful in mathematical learning. In a study of Japanese culture, Senger (1997) incorporated concepts of geometry and patterns as children learned to make origami. Forseth (1980) demonstrated how experiences with art could positively affect children's attitudes toward mathematics, as well as toward achievement gains.

Today's technology, and the omnipresent computer in classrooms for even the youngest children, is another way art is integrated into the total curriculum. Through use of clip art software, word processing, graphics, and color, the computer allows children to combine the symbol systems of drawing, talking, writing, and symbol weaving (Blackstock & Miller, 1992). Gouzouasis (1994) described the effectiveness of a multimedia project with children ages 8 to 10 years old. The program, composed of both acoustic and visual elements, linked the arts with computer literacy and the existing curriculum.

Regardless, making art and learning about art are basic for young children. Children need art in the curriculum for art's sake (Balke, 1997). The value of art lies in the contributions it makes to individuals' experience with and understanding of their world. No other reason is necessary to justify the inclusion of art in curriculum for young children. How else would children learn about color, form, line, shape, and texture if it were not through their experiences with learning to see their environment with all its richness and complexity, and then learning how to represent their environment and experiences through art?

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